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LETTER DATED 12 MARCH 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you of an incident that took place on 28 February 1997. At 0100 hours on that day a helicopter from United States frigate No. 40 overflew the Iraqi dredger Al-Najaf at a point inside Iraqi territorial waters 11 kilometres south-east of Ras al-Bishah in the Shatt al-Arab and ordered the master of the dredger to drop anchor. At 0710 hours personnel from the United States frigate in question proceeded to search the dredger, and the search continued until 1020 hours.

I request your intervention with the United States of America with a view to halting and ensuring that there is no recurrence of these unwarranted acts of provocation, which are incompatible with the Charter of the United Nations and international law inasmuch as they are in flagrant violation of the sovereignty of a State Member of the United Nations. In accordance with the principle of State responsibility, I also affirm the legally established right of the Republic of Iraq to seek compensation for the damage caused by these violations.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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